

# Exposure of Media Reports on Islam among Malaysian Non-Muslims

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**Abstract:** Various studies have proven the leverage of the media exposure in exerting their power on the mindset of the audiences. Therefore, this study illustrates exposure of media reports to understand if exposing to media's reports paves the way for changes in perception. The main objective of the study is to identify perception of non-Muslim Malaysians towards information concerning Islam and Muslims in the media. The media contains misleading and unreliable contents, which can lead to destabilization by generating negative depictions on the perceptions. Significantly, in a multicultural country like Malaysia where various races are living together in harmony and peace, small portion of negative beliefs or reports on any religions or sect could jeopardizes the peace process in the nation. The major results concludes that mass media in general are all pervasive in their reports but not particularly pervasive. This statement summarizes most of the significant in currently accepted perceived facts about mass media in Malaysia. Non-Muslims in Malaysia hold positive perceptions towards their fellow Muslims. As non-Muslims in Malaysia are well aware of the media hegemony, one's ideology could not be simply breached by negative reports. Significantly, non-Muslims respect Islam as the official religion of people in Malaysia.

**Keywords:** Media exposure, Islamophobia, Islam representation, Media reports.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Malaysia as a unique country blends with multi-religious and multi-racial population. Despite major differences, Malaysian people live in a harmonious society where their respect for each other's beliefs and faiths remain intact. As a pluralistic state, Malaysia comprises of people from diverse ethnics, races, religions, tribes and cultures.

Human's perception is always at the risk of receiving highly sensationalized stories. Even though many take media's power and influence for granted, yet there are diverse range of contents subsist in the media that is full of bias information with hidden consequences. Based on the Wahlberg and Sjoberg (2000) paper on risk perception of the media, the authors have figured out the need to comprehend how different subgroups and people in general form their perception in identifying the media contents. This is mainly due the fact that, exposing too much to the media content especially international news programs and entertainment products dispositions the perception of the viewers.

## II. MEDIA EXPOSURE

From many Western news perspectives, Islam is tantamount to jihad and within this perspective jihad is understood as unjustified, violence, irrational and extreme against the non-Muslims. Notwithstanding, the representation of Islam and Muslims in the media relates to the lack of mutual acceptance as well as lack of acceptance of differences. Kabir (2009) argues that media agencies are expert in creating public panic around terrorist threat. Therefore, war on terrorism could be described as war of images, and the most explicit images are the terrorist's victim. For instance, the ongoing discrimination in association with the Islamophobia shows all the Muslims around the globe as a threat to the security and peace.

According to Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) observatory report on the Islamophobia in (2008) leaders around the world express their comments and concerns over the increase number of prejudgments and bias views against Islam

and Muslims. Amid these reports, the Malaysia's Foreign Minister has also express concern and raises awareness of international community's towards the issue.

As it was argued by Daud (2010) the terms Muslims being fundamentals, radicals or extremists are generally interpreted from the predominant Western perspective. Indeed, these perspectives are seem to associate Western ideologies as secular and moderate whereas traditional Muslims and exclusively Muslims who opposes the Western ideologies and intellectuals as militant, radicals, fundamentals and extremists. In addition, Muslims notice that international and foreign media generally treat non-Western cultures and their religious manifestation as constructive and rich in human's tapestry, but similar stance were not shown towards the Islam. In oppose to above fact, Malaysia as one of the leading countries in multiculturalism, its non-Muslim's populations are given the right to practice their religions and faiths.

Journalists, editors, publishers and others professions contribute a great set of communication manner into the industry in order to disseminate a huge amount of information through televisions, radios, newspapers and the Internet. Apart from this, Sahad, Chu, and Abdullah (2013) has given a sharper statement that the concept of mass media is the most potent and influential instrument in spreading millions of new ideologies, beliefs and thoughts. While, in line with these functions that media provides, one very dynamic fact should not be neglected is that media is notorious for spreading false news, sensationalisms, defamations, and accusations.

All media types are used for different forms of integrations and communications. Within these range of services, citizens acquire information through various available sources that shapes their thoughts and perceptions. In addition to this information generated by traditional mass media, varied range of information also come into the hands of pubic widely. They can be categorized in conversations and communications that are through foreign programs, local products or via new media such as Face book and Twitter.

### **III. THE EMERGENCE OF ISLAMOPHOBIA**

Despite media's one sided coverage and publication on Muslims and Islam, today's major challenge is getting accurate and authentic information. In a published journal by Diane and Sabina in (2008) the authors have expressed that experts, scholars and media commentator in the post 9/11, politicized every simple issue which in turn generated hazardous moments for the public.

For instance, after all these propagandas by experts, scholars and media commentator people are in search for answers to questions like: "Why Muslims detest non-Muslims?" "Is Islam compatible with democracy?" "What are the causes for fundamentalism and radicalism?" "What are the causes of global terrorism?" These are the primary elements that readers frequently caught between - the contenting positions of qualified experts and a new team of "Islamophobic" authors who engage in political reading of Muslim and Islam history. As the matter of fact, the flipside of this image shows discrimination associated with Islamophobia. In particular, this phenomenon turns all the points to Muslims as a threat to the security and peace.

Generally, Muslims have been the center of attention for media outlets. In exploring the exposure of media impact on the Islam, a clear example could be the burgeoning number of entertainment media produced in the West. According to Shrum (2011) most of the contents were mixed with insult and were broadcast globally. Of 900 Western films, Muslim characters in particular Arab were found to be extremist, racist and irrational. Based on a research by Alliance of Civilizations (2010) the impact of insult by popular entertainment media and the impact of injury by Western news is to feed hatred, humiliation and in most of the times is propaganda against Muslim world and Islam. The results of this propaganda or rather this dislike become more evident in early 2006, when a Danish newspaper printed a controversial caricature that sparked tension between Muslims and non-Muslims around the globe.

Whereby, in the Muslim countries, the Western TV programs or Hollywood films are very popular and reflects no negative identity of the Western value or any specific character. In fact, vast majority of people are encouraged and eager to emulate the Western fashions and characters. It is import to note that, news channel outlets and entertainment media in some Muslim countries are vivacious and internationally recognized so it competes with universal Western TV, news, films and other cultural products. For example, the Iranian film industry and TV production is among the most respected in the world. The Egyptian TV industry is powerful with regional broadcasting and distribution. The Nigerian television and film industry provides much of the news and video market in the sub-Saharan Africa with content of debatable

quality. Nevertheless, all of these powers within the Muslim world face tremendous obstacles and challenges in reaching the global market particularly if they strive to find a venue to be presented in the West.

#### IV. PRESENCE OF MEDIA PLATFORMS

For further support of above argument, Habib in (2009) express some range of facts and themes that Malaysia as a multicultural society is a perfect place to test the media effects on the people's perception. Significantly, Malaysia's close economic tie with the West especially the United States has led the doors open for entering the foreign media product cultures into the local context. In addition, Malaysia has been accepted as a country that regulates ethnic conflicts and maintains racial harmony in a most remarkable and unique manner. The political system of the country works upon power sharing which in turn, allows every ethnic communities in the state to rule and respect each other's beliefs and way of practices. Consequentially, the durability of this ruling system is highly requires and depends on the positive thinking towards each other's religion.

Abdul's study in (2010) found that the international media has a significant effect on the mindset of Malaysians in a way that enables them to question their perceptions, modernity and traditional values. But, this does not conclusively mean Malaysians have entirely neglected their core values and awareness. Instead, they have fitted various forms of global culture measurement derived from global media consumption as a mean for the self-identity rather than national-identity or their collectivities. Even though ethnicity and religion remains vital in the lives of Malaysians, not all see themselves exclusively restricted by this indication. In fact, it is a multiple forms of identities within global cultural perception which is shaped by the media consumption. In line with these identities, non-Muslim's Malaysian consumption of international programmes and foreign news enables them to cross their identical perception into the Western-Asian perception. Therefore, these types of exposures to the global mass media consumption pave the way for the irregularity in perception among non-Muslims towards their local media firms.

The advent of new media fascinated various groups, organizations, individuals and many other communities. Due to its cheap, fast and direct way of service, new media is now one of the most significant sources of receiving and dissemination information. Krasnoboka (2012) argues that with the advent of new media or rather the Internet, government faced challenge in controlling the flow of information. As compare to the traditional media, it is difficult to monitor and screen all the activities in new media.

As compare to traditional mainstream media, social media sites are using mainly up-to-dated application and communication methods where news information and data streams are accessible in an easier mode. People from various backgrounds such as friends, colleagues, religious and communities represent a significant number of page traffic. According to Lightspeed Research (2011), despite the ongoing position of mass media such as television, radio and newspaper, consumption of news indeed raised and still grow on the social media. In particular, this has raised among young by 15 percent and 30 percent of the 18-34 year olds which are getting their news from Facebook in an average week.

The press in Malaysia, in particular newspapers are owned and control by major political organizations. According to Jomo (2013) the media ownership or rather the newspapers' ownership in Malaysia has been divided along party boundaries and ethnic orientations. With, United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) that are in control of traditional newspapers. As the matter of fact, these newspapers mainly concentrate on events that are significance to the divergent religious or ethnic groups. Contrary, in a book by Lent in (1982) the author specifically states that, Malaysian government have amended the printing bill in 1974 in assurance and avoiding of foreign shareholders' influence in the local media.

News comes to the hand of public through various means including newspaper, radio, television, magazine and notably via the Internet. It is vital to note that the role of traditional media has been very prominent in development of the Malaysian society. According to Salman (2010) in Malaysia, Bernama as the National News Agency provides both international and local news to its subscribers. Bernama was established in 1968 and acts as conduit between government and the local media. As the role of traditional media is to work with the government to mobilize people towards national achievement and better development, Information Communication technology (ICT) is now in play to lead Malaysia in the era of globalization and knowledge sharing.

## V. INFORMATION ABOUT ISLAM AND MUSLIMS

In a paper published by Rahim, Pawanteh, and Salman (2011) the authors have gathered significant elements in regard to media's exposure on perception of Malaysians. In line with this, the authors have stated that television, radio and the Internet are highly considered as one of the fast media in the Malaysia for breaking news stories. This tendency moves in a rapid way with the intention of creating so called more informed society. Therefore, it is highly crucial to not neglect the tremendous power of media in sending a message. As it was argued by Rabler and Huber (2012) media has an ability to create a way into participation by not only democratizing the source of information also as a mean of communication that enables citizens and society more informed.

Sources, in which users get their information, come from foreign news bulletins. This is more noticeable among Malaysia's population where people consume more international news than any other internal news. As a result, one possible effect of exposing to these exposures would be the arousal of misleading contents and reports by the media. Likewise, misleading contents of media is an issue that can pave the way for various changes or effects the perception of inter-religious and ethnic groups. It is also essential to consider the fact that misleading the audiences mind with false reports can be used as a tool to contributes and create destabilization of the public sphere.

On the other hand, in Malaysia, non-Muslims and Muslims are living side-by-side in a territory that rainbow of information are exchanged through media news. As Department of Statistics Malaysia (2012) reports the population of non-Muslims more that 40%, thus a tangible question could arise as an indication that the danger of misleading influential flow of information can jeopardize the relation between non-Muslims and Muslims. To further elaborate on this matter, Deggans (2012) express some range of ideas and themes that understanding the flow of information which comes into the hands of public could be used as a tool to disrupt and weaken the local ideologies.

### Question

- How non-Muslims in Malaysia perceive information about Islam and Muslims in the media?

### Objective

- To identify the perception of non-Muslim Malaysians towards information about Islam and Muslim in the media.

## VI. THEORY

There are always stories and news behind what audiences read, listens or view within the mass media. Based on a study by Rashidi and Rasti (2012), news is not a phenomenon that emerges naturally from facts in real life, instead it's a fact that's been determined both socially and culturally. However, news producers are the social agent within the system of social relation who divulges their own inspection and perception towards what is basically just reported. As a result, news is ideologically a framed report of an event.

Segvic (2005) defines media framing theory as the news frame organizes everyday reality and the news frame is part of everyday actuality, thus it is a crucial feature of news. On the other hand, framing has been defined as the capability of the media to manipulate the audience's understanding of a matter based on the way the media presents that particular issue.

Media plays a crucial role in disseminating information to the public as media texts can shape the values and attitudes of society. Frye (2005), sensationalism is a part of framing and framing has been researched as a theory for media effects. If a story is exaggerated or given a certain tone by the writer, then the writer has framed that story using sensationalistic elements. On the other hand, in an article by Scheufele (1999), the author explains framing as one of the most significant approaches to examine how media influences audiences' thought toward an issue and also how international media agencies struggle to frame news, either for their own benefit or other external allies. For further elaboration, Scheufele has stated that the way stories are framed can strongly influence people's attitude and their perception towards an issue.

Framing is referred as a frame of reference or a situation within which a concern is described. For instance, a news bulletin about the international increase of oil price can be variously framed as America's mistake for invading oil-rich countries in the Middle-East. Different frame of news can bring the attention and concern of the public to a different place of thinking. Constant reports on 9/11 terrorism act and headlines labelling Muslims as jihadists, extremist or violence-prone brought people's thinking into the hostile side and negativity of the Islam and Muslims.

Agenda-setting research has experienced numerous advancements over the past 40 years since McCombs and Shaw in (1972) first examined the leverage and influence of the news media on the public's perception during the 1968 U.S. presidential election. According to McCombs and Shaw (1972) media in general have an agenda setting function toward their reports. Agenda-setting theory has been described as a process in which media outlets tend to select and ponder on certain issue or one side of an issue. This tendency is keener towards leading audience's perception on issues that are more salient or essential than others. Furthermore, this can be recognized as media's greater emphasis on certain stories and placing it as the more prominent message or news in the newscast.

In a book by Wanta in (1997) the author has argued that despite societal effects of agenda-setting, this process takes place mainly within individuals. According to the author, the first step occurs once individuals form their judgments and beliefs about the perceived reliability of the media. Based on these perceptions and beliefs, individuals form a level in which credibility of information in the media is identifiable. Then, individuals expose themselves based on these identified level of information. Lastly, the exposure to the media's information leads the individuals to agenda-setting effects.

Likewise, Amiri (2012) has also used susceptibility of agenda-setting to examine differences between racial and religious groups. The author has argued that, media reports are more bias and sharp towards issues concerning Muslims minorities. The problem is not the lack of faith in the Muslims; instead it is the media that sets the agenda to manipulate the perception of non-Muslims towards terrorist behavior of Muslims. As morbid as it may sound, these agenda-settings of media report gives clue to the listener, reader and viewer on how to stereotyping other races, ethnics and religions.

As it was argued by Imediwa (2011) there are two reasons behind media's agenda-setting concept. Firstly, it is the public that has limited attention span over a story or an issue. If a problem or a concern does not match with the interest of the public, this will not be appeared on the public's agenda. Secondly, it is the limited capacity of a story or an issue that appears in the press, public, communities, group or government due to restrained source, money and space. Therefore, the pivotal fact of agenda-setting is to find harmony and differences from individual's stand of view. According to Alvin (2011) the agenda-setting theory somehow works in a way that brings groups and communities closer to each other. Notwithstanding, the concept agenda-setting helps in term of understanding an issue and provides ways to think and how to think of a concern.

## VII. METHODOLOGY

To fulfill the objective of this study a quantitative method was adopted to collect the primary data due to: (1) opportunity that quantitative method provides to the researcher to understand views and perception of the chosen sample; (2) allowing the researcher to measure data and generalize results from the identified sample; (3) decisiveness of the quantitative method helps to count and measure the problem and understand how rampant it is by looking for projectable outcome to a larger population; (4) and quantitative researcher method provides structured technique tools such as questionnaires to collect numerical data.

The research design, structure and questionnaire of this study were used by various previous studies such as Lars, Ezhar, & Annette (2007), Ushama & Moten (2006) and (Taman, 2009). Hence, the main research design of this study was based on mentioned authors. Then a revised set of questions were used to obtain relevant information regarding the perception of non-Muslims towards media exposure.

This study focuses on the Seri Kembangan in Serdang area only. There are vast numbers of Chinese and considerable number of Indians in this area which are likely expose to the mass media. Contrary, an advantage to the subjects of this study is closeness of the UPM to the chosen location where young and educated students live in the area. Notwithstanding, it is vital to take into the consideration that these factors can help the quality of the questionnaire as well as a good contribution to the research problem.

This research study is based on non-probability sampling. All data gathered through self-administrative questionnaire which was written in English. Convenient sampling has been chosen to collect all data due to the fact that everyone is somehow exposing to the mass media contents in general. The question types are close-ended question followed by tunnel format in which straight questions are organized throughout.

Table 1: Operationalization of the variables

Variables	Types	Level of Measurement	Statistical Analysis
Information about Islam and Muslims by media	Likert Scale	Ordinal	Descriptive (percentage, mean and S. D)
Relation between information about Islam and Muslims by media and formation of non-Muslims perception.			Pearson Correlation

The overall data collection took place within a week started from 23 April 2014 to 30 April. The time span for every questionnaire was set to approximately 10-minute. The respondents were required to answer the questions and return it as fast as they can. Otherwise, the researcher gave them the maximum of 2-hour and return the questionnaire. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20 was used for analyzing all statistical procedures. As the basic procedure in social science, the statistical data preceded through two parts, which are descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. For descriptive data analysis, frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to understand how non-Muslims form their perception towards exposure of media contents.

Likewise, for inferential statistics, the Pearson correlation test was conducted to identify the relationship between the variable and exposure of media reports on Islam and Muslims among Malaysian non-Muslims. Pearson correlation test was specifically used for the fourth and fifth objective of the study. This is to understand the relationship between information about Islam and Muslims by media and formation of the non-Muslims perception.

### VIII. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Majority of respondents comprises of female participants with 61.3 percent followed by 38.7 percent of male participant. This result indicates that female in Malaysia showing more interest and attention towards topics concerning media. In addition to gender, the race of the respondents were also asked and required. Amid Chinese and Indian, the biggest percentage belongs to the Chinese with 56.1 percent followed by Indian with 37.9 percent and small numbers of respondents are indicated as others with 6.1 percent only.

In term of religion, large percentage of respondents comprises Christians with 43.4 percent as compare to Hindu which involves 29.7 percent. Of the remaining religion, the number of Buddhist respondents who participated in this study is 20.0 percent in total. Likewise, there is least percentage of the respondents who selected their religion as others with 6.8 percent only. As it was summarized in the Malaysia's census report, large numbers of non-Muslims live in Malaysia especially in the chosen area of this study. Therefore, the number of Christians, Hindus and Buddhists who participated in this survey were expected to be high as they contribute important role in the result of the study.

A total number of 281 respondents are between the ages of 20 – 30 years old which is consist of 73.8 percent followed by ages between 31 - 40 which is 14.7 percent. Other age groups consist of respondents between ages of 41 - 50 years old with 6.1 percent and respondents between 51 - 55 years old which is 5.4 percent only. Indeed, this data shows that youngsters in Malaysia are active in resolving issues that might affect them and their participation has a positive impact on the overall finding of the study. This is mainly due the fact that, youngster's judgments and perceptions on the topic which is exposure of media report on Islam and Muslims has a central impact on the future relation of people with each other.

Majority of the respondents are holding a qualification which is a demonstration of the high rate of literacy in Malaysia. Only 15 percent of the participants were the high school holder. The biggest numbers of respondents are diploma holder with 40.5 percent followed by bachelor holders whom comprises of 28.9 percent. The other qualified participants of this survey are master degree holders with 10.0 percent followed by PhD holders whom only comprises of 5.0 percent.

As the matter of fact, qualification of the respondents produces knowledge that can be used as a weapon for better understanding of the media exposure concerning various issues in the society. To be more specific, exposure of media reports on Islam and Muslims has been discussed by various literatures around the globe. People who are involved in the

knowledge acquisition, have better and clearer understanding of the image and issue. In line with this elaboration, more than 70 percent of the respondents of this study were qualified person with good educational background. In fact, this concerns the quality content of this study as more qualified participation bring more reliability and knowledge to the context of the topic.

The overall comprehension of preferred typed of news is to understand one's mentality and approach towards available news. News stories and reports are usually divided into two categories which are known as hard news and soft news. The chronicles of the current events are called hard news whereas feature stories that show the human's interest are called soft news. Reports that are featuring politics, conflicts, religion, crimes or economics are considered as hard news. Whereby, contents and reports that feature elements such as lifestyle, entertainments and people's profile are considered as soft news.

The demographic characteristics of this study has reveals the fact that majority of the respondents have shown interest in reading and watching both hard news and soft news reports and stories. More that 30.0 percent of the respondents preferred both hard and soft news. To be more precise, the biggest percentages of the respondents are showing more interest in soft news stories which is 37.4 percent. Slightly less than this figure, other respondents has shown interest in hard news stories with 32.6 percent.

An overview of the data illustrates that majority of the respondents are highly educated and have qualification which contributes to the quality of the topic within various contexts. Notwithstanding, more than 80 percent of the respondents who participated in this survey are considered as young and fresh minded who have adequate knowledge on the controversial issues surrounded by the media. Furthermore, showing interest in both hard and soft news has created a balance in judgment of the respondent's perception towards exposure of media reports on Islam and Muslims among Malaysian non-Muslims.

**Table 2: Descriptive analysis of independent variables: perception of non-Muslim Malaysians towards information about Islam and Muslim in the media (n=380).**

perception of non-Muslim towards information about Islam and Muslim in the media	Frequency					M	S.D
	1	2	3	4	5		
Malaysian mainstream media, TV and print media represent negative stories about Muslims and Islam	177	128	27	16	32	1.94	1.20
Western media represent negative stories about Muslims and Islam	14	15	170	475	134	<b>3.71</b>	<b>1.10</b>
Negative stories about Muslims and Islam are shared through Internet compared to other mediums	116	27	81	60	96	2.98	1.57
News stories on Muslims and Islam are more positive in the Western media than local media	218	45	51	45	21	1.96	1.29
Western media initiated discrimination against Islam and Muslims during 9/11 attack	12	12	201	66	89	3.54	0.98
After 9/11, Western media feed public with misleading reports to show negative image on Muslims and Islam	14	10	37	277	42	<b>3.85</b>	<b>0.79</b>
I think misleading media coverage on Muslims and Islam in the media is slowly changing to positive	172	51	111	4	42	2.19	1.32
Media does not aim to use misleading information on Islam and Muslims to attract more readership or viewership	113	73	67	28	99	2.80	1.57
Media does not use misleading news content to increase popularity	217	43	41	39	40	2.05	1.42
Media in general encourage stories with less bias information	244	51	20	18	47	<b>1.87</b>	<b>1.40</b>
Total						2.68	

**Note: 1 – Strongly Disagree. 2 –Disagree. 3 –Somewhat Agree. 4 –Agree. 5 – Strongly Agree**

Table 2 indicates the descriptive analysis of independent variables which is perception of non-Muslim Malaysians towards information about Islam and Muslim in the media. Therefore, according to the table the highest score of the mean value which is 3.85 based on total score of 2.68 belongs to the item number 6 concerning after 9/11 where Western media feed public with misleading reports to show negative image on Muslims and Islam. On the other hand, the lowest score for the mean value is 1.87 where the respondents perceived the fact that media in general encourage stories with less bias information.

Based on the item number 6 observation, vast number of respondents perceived the fact that after 9/11, Western media feed public with misleading reports to show negative image on Muslims and Islam. These respondents chose to rate attribute 4 as their answer to the question. Meanwhile, majority of the respondents did not believe in the fact that media in general encourage stories with less bias information by rating the attribute number 1 as their response.

As Standard Deviation (SD) is an indication of how far is the individual responses to a question differ from the mean, the above table shows item number 6 with the SD of 0.79 and the mean of 3.85. This, however, indicates that the individual responses are clustered and not deviate from the mean. While, the lowest mean which is 1.87 with the SD of 1.40 is an indication that data points are far from the mean. It is also important to note that the higher SD in item number 10 could describe people's concern over the issue as many of them rated the attribute 1 as their response.

In addition to the table's description, the second highest mean value is the item number 1 which is about Western media's representation of negative stories about Muslims and Islam. As the matter of fact, the mean value for this item is 3.71 with a SD of 1.10 that is an indication of data points are been far from the mean. Based on the table observation, quite tremendous number of respondents perceived that western media represent negative stories about Muslims and Islam. Indeed, respondents chose to rate attribute 4 as their answer to the question.

**Table 3: Correlation test between information about Islam and Muslims by media and formation of the non-Muslims perception.**

Dependent variable	Coefficients	
	R	Sig. (2-tailed)
Information about Islam and Muslims by media	0.742	0.000

**Note: \*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)**

As the table number 3 above indicate the result of the Pearson Correlation test, it is clear that there is a significant relationship between information about Islam and Muslims by media and formation of the non-Muslims perception. This implies that, changes in one variable are strongly correlated with changes in the second variable. With this interpretation, it can be concluded that there is a strong relationship between information about Islam and Muslims by media and formation of the non-Muslims perception.

## IX. DISCUSSION RELATED TO THEORY

Despite framing and agenda-setting of the media, non-Muslims in Malaysia are indirectly exposed to the media exposure. Even though framing and agenda-setting of the media subsist in every society, a remarkable point is that non-Muslims in Malaysia are well educated on this matter. As the matter of fact, news framing and agenda-setting of the media at the age of news technology does not influence the mindset of non-Muslims in Malaysia.

Even though mass media or in particular Western media have a tendency to create a campaign to show negative side of Islam and Muslims, it is vital to comprehend that this propaganda does not work within Malaysian context. In fact, majority of the non-Muslims perceive positivity and good image in their fellow Muslims in Malaysia. This, however, creates more unity and development towards a nation that works under contemplation and illumination among rainbow of race, ethnic, language, color belief, and religion.

After 9/11, Western media feed public with misleading reports to show negative image on Muslims and Islam. Therefore, Malaysia as an Islamic nation was also under scrutiny due to its big number of non-Muslims population. Based on this



point, past and current researches are showing the fact that the agenda-setting of the international news coverage on issues concerning terrorism had not an impact on the mindset of non-Muslims in Malaysia. This tendency is more noticeable among Malaysian non-Muslims who believe Western media are exerting their agenda-setting in the mind of public to disseminate misleading information.

The finding of this research has indicated that, non-Muslims in Malaysia are relatively interested in all types of news. One fact that should not be neglected is that ignoring news and current affairs in the 21 century is tantamount to disregarding importance of impactful phenomena which could bring changes in the social life. Every news type has its own leverage and impact on the mindset. For instance, hard news reports by the media could pave the way for changes in the geo-political and economic affair of the country. By taking into the consideration that these changes could be either positive or negative. Whereas, soft news reports could reflect as a mirror on the nation's developments and progress. As such, major sports events or other entertainment matters can be tool to change the perception of the viewers for healthier foundation.

## X. CONCLUSION

The study finds that non-Muslims in Malaysia are positive in observing news media regardless of biasness and one-sided stories. Along this line, as the nature of international news media coverage is often consistent with the foreign policy of the nation, to a certain degree non-Muslims in Malaysia have comprehended this trend.

In addition to this conclusion, the agenda-setting function and framing of the news media specificity foreign cultural products does not fit well with the values and aspirations of the Malaysians. In fact, the agenda-setting and framing theory of the news media has been recognized as one-sided ideology to reshape the nature and direction of the news coverage. The ultimate goal of this trend is to turn the perception of the audiences on the specific topic or issue.

Malaysia as a dynamic country is a perfect place to test the exposure of media reports on Islam and Muslims. This is due to vast numbers of races, ethnic, beliefs and religion in the country. This opportunity of testing exposure of media reports on Islam and Muslims specifically on the non-Muslims' perception has shown tremendous results.

Significant finding of the study shows that non-Muslims respect Islam as the official religion of people in the Malaysia. This element explains more than what non-Muslims perceived. This is an indication of clean and peaceful relationship of minds of the non-Muslims and Muslims in the Malaysian society. Even though non-Muslims in Malaysia are exposed to the mass media, it is appreciated that, non-Muslims are aware of the overall image of the news reporting and media exposure.

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